

# Advancing Cannabis Safety: Research Overview & Functional Framework



**Sara Schneider, PhD** (she, her, hers)  
Postdoctoral Scholar, Nicotine & Cannabis  
Policy Center (NCPC)

**Hargun Sethi, BA** (she, her, hers)  
Law Student, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign  
Alumna: NCPC Tobacco Endgame Scholar

# Acknowledgements

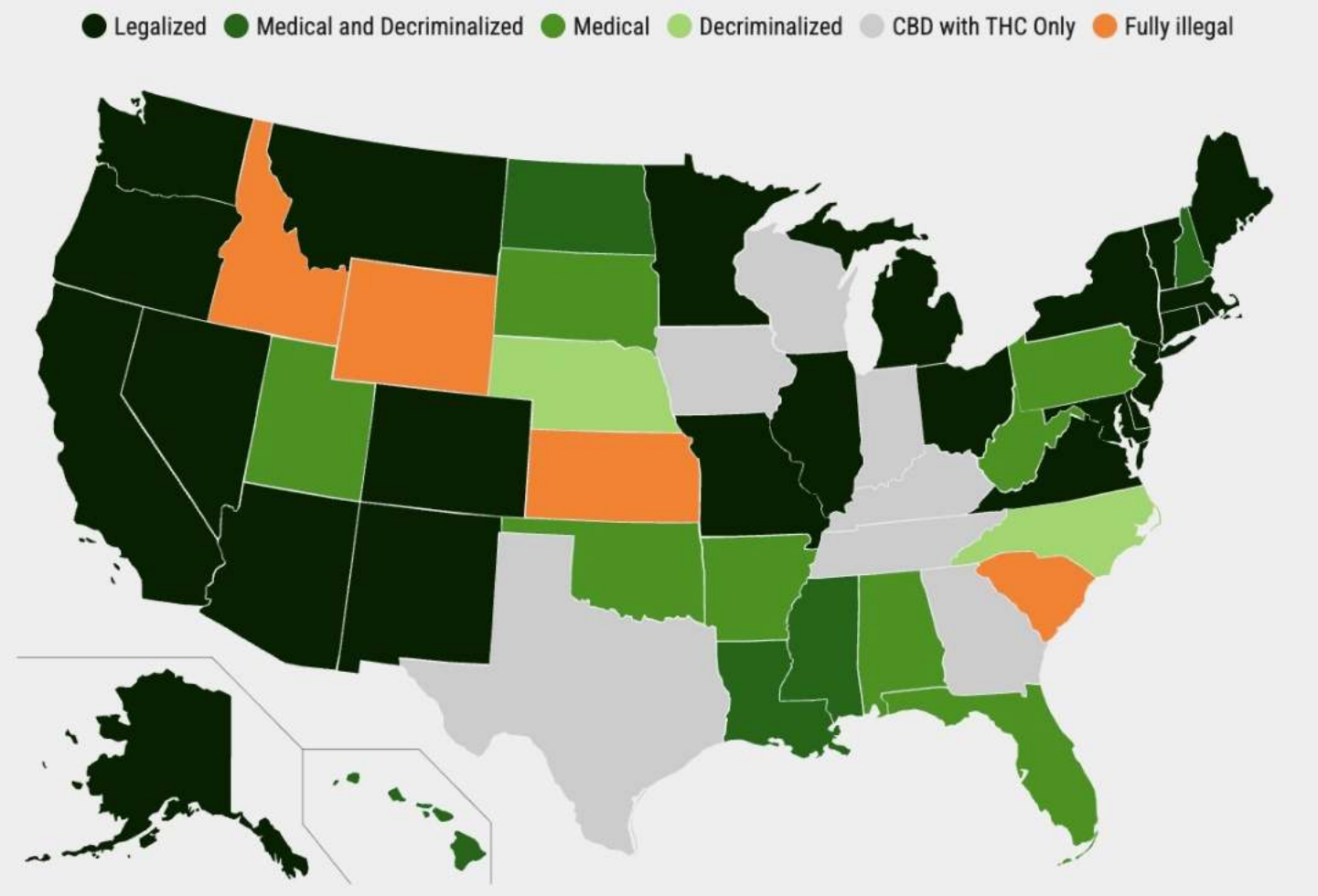


Arturo Durazo, PhD  
Director, Nicotine & Cannabis Policy Center  
Community-Based Health Scientist, HSRI

Anna V. Song, PhD  
Professor, Psychological Sciences  
Associate Vice Provost for Academic Personnel



# Current State of Marijuana Legalization



# Breaking Federal Developments

1. President Biden requested a scientific review of how marijuana is scheduled (10/2022)
2. Health & Human Services recommended rescheduling marijuana from Schedule I → Schedule III (8/2023)
3. Attorney General proposed federal rescheduling change to DEA (5/2024)



# Federal Developments

## Rescheduling Marijuana:

- **Limitations to Reforms:** While reducing penalties and expanding research, it does not adequately address disparities.
- **Sustained Challenges:**
  - Regulatory burdens (e.g., coverage by health insurance)
  - Limited access (e.g., FDA approval requirements)
  - Penalties affecting marginalized communities



# Federal Developments

- DEA is soliciting public comments until July 22<sup>nd</sup>, 8:59 PM (PT)
- Comments are used to help decide the final rule on the proposal
  - The process is not run like a ballot, where the most votes wins
- Currently ~11k comments
- Comments can be submitted through the Federal eRulemaking Portal



# How to Give Public Comment

1. Go to [www.regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov)

3. Click "comment"

2. Click this box or type the title into the search bar:

🔥 What's Trending

PR DRUG ENFORCEMENT ADMINISTRATION

**Schedules of Controlled Substances: Rescheduling of Marijuana**

Comments Due - July 22, 2024

Regulations.gov

Make a difference. Submit your comments and let your voice be heard.

Search for dockets and documents on agency actions

Support

View all recently added Dockets Documents Comments

4. Write a Comment

Commenter's Checklist

Comment\*

Start typing comment here...

5000

Attach Files

You can attach up to 20 files, but each file cannot exceed 10MB. Valid file types include: bmp, docx, gif, jpg, jpeg, pdf, png, pptx, rtf, sgml, tif, tiff, txt, wpd, xlsx, xml.

Drop files here or [Browse...](#)

Email Address

Email Address

Give Feedback

PR PROPOSED RULE

## Schedules of Controlled Substances: Rescheduling of Marijuana

Posted by the **Drug Enforcement Administration** on May 20, 2024

Comment





# Previous Models as Guides



# Alcohol Control as a Model

## Similarities

- Moderation regulations
- Intoxication
- Potential health benefits
- Youth prevention

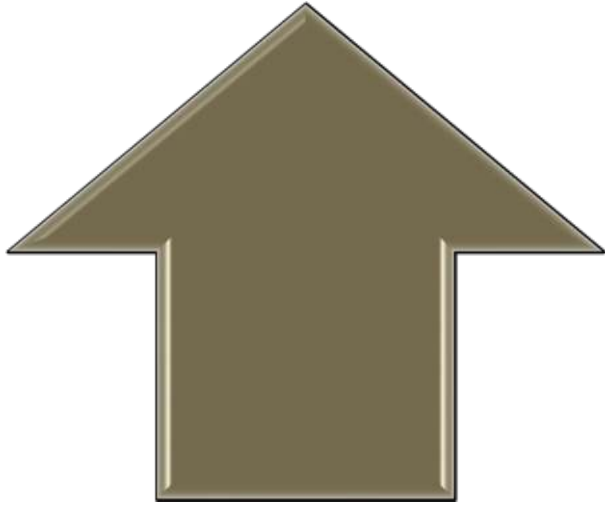


## Dissimilarities

- Direct bystander effects
- Regulation of products (unlicensed production)

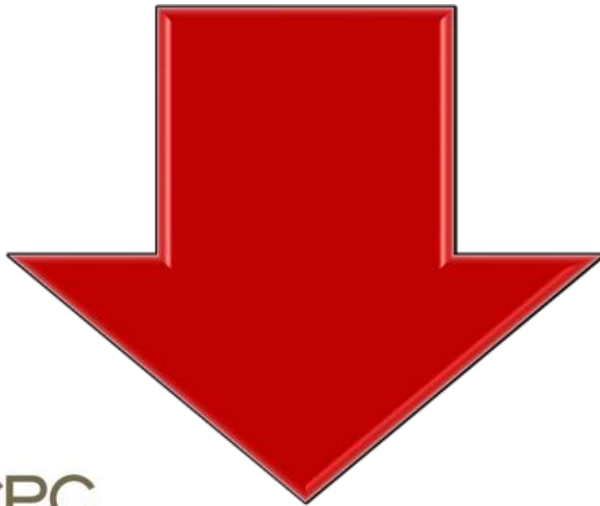


# Tobacco Control as a Model



## Similarities

- Mode of delivery
- Health consequences to user
- Secondhand and thirdhand smoke risk
- Youth prevention



## Dissimilarities

- There is no safe dose of tobacco
- There is no medicinal use of commercial tobacco



# Framework for a “functional” marijuana market

## Tobacco & Marijuana Control Nexus

- Toxicology Analysis of Combustion and Vapes

- Science Advocacy
- Preventing Youth Access

- SHS and THS Exposure

- Comprehensive Policies

Products are safe for consumption

Public and potential consumers can make a fully-informed decision

Those who choose not to partake are protected

Strong safeguards and policies to prevent youth use

Products are accessible to those who want and need it

- Medicinal Cannabis



# 1. Products are safe for consumption



Strong licensing and regulation for products

- Department of Cannabis Control oversight of licenses

Public understanding of the role of licenses and regulation

- Identification of licensed products

Strategy to address unregulated market and tobacco co-use or combined use

Example of weaknesses in strategy: EVALI outbreak

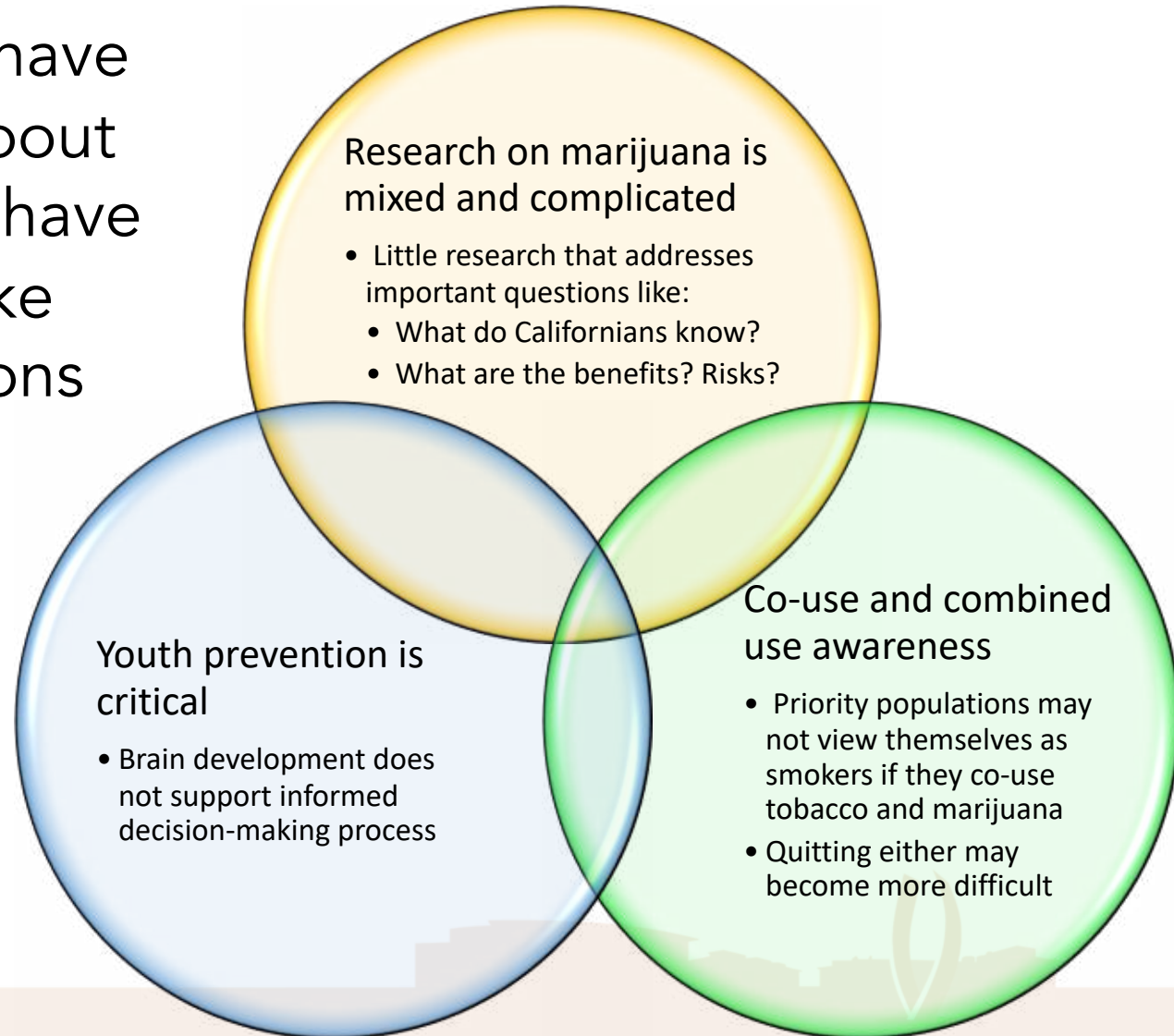


**EVALI:**

e-cigarette, or vaping, product use associated lung injury

# 2. Fully-informed decision-making

Consumers must have full knowledge about risks/benefits and have capacity to make informed decisions



# 3. Protections for non-users

Secondhand and thirdhand  
smoke protection

Continued  
support for  
research on  
intoxication

Multiunit  
housing

Inclusion of  
cannabis in  
tobacco control  
policies



# 4. Preventing youth use



Curbing marketing techniques geared towards youth

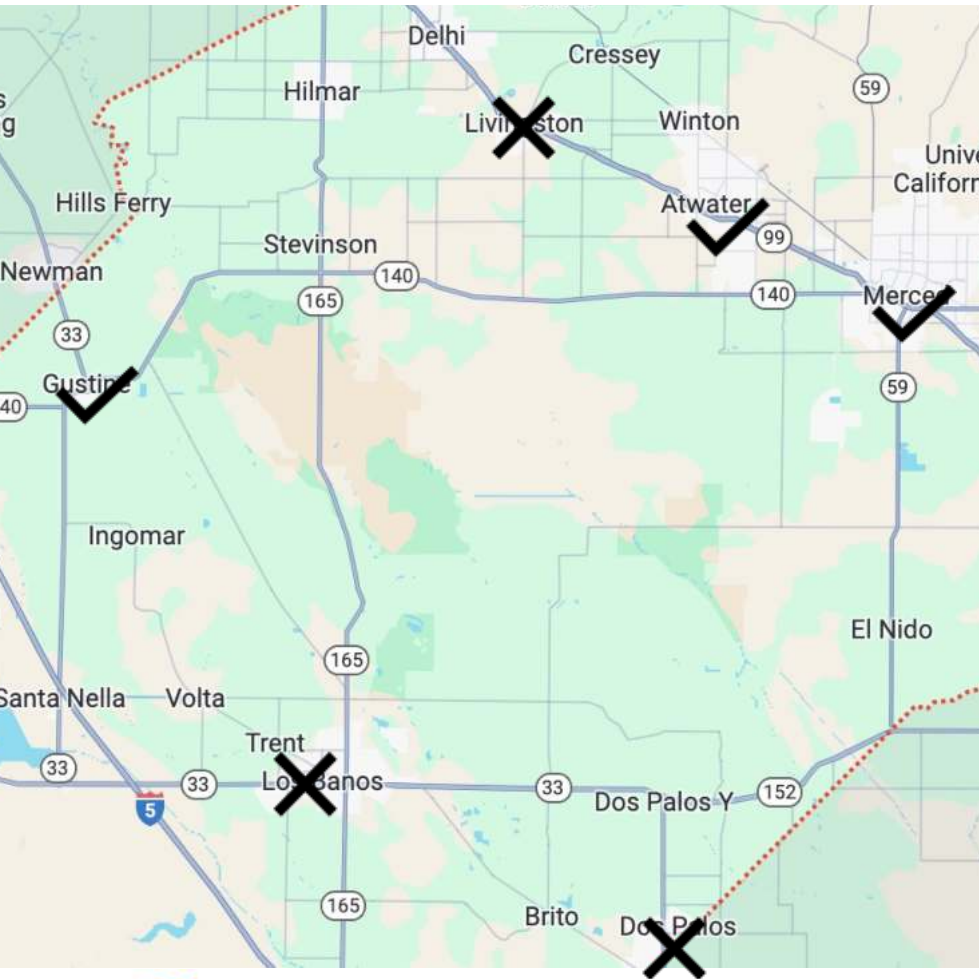
- Flavors
- Packaging

Brain development continues until mid-20's

- Substance use interferes with brain development
- Pre-frontal cortex



# 5. Product accessibility



City	County	Recreational Retailer (Storefront and/or Delivery)
Atwater	Merced	Allowed
Dos Palos	Merced	Prohibited
Gustine	Merced	Allowed
Livingston	Merced	Prohibited
Los Banos	Merced	Prohibited
Merced	Merced	Allowed





# 5. Product accessibility

The screenshot shows a website interface for finding weed products in Merced, CA. At the top, there is a search bar with the text "Products, retailers, brands, and more" and a location pin for "Merced, CA". Below the search bar are navigation tabs: "Dispensaries", "Deliveries", "Brands", "Products", "Deals", "Learn", and "Strains". The main heading is "Weed listings in Merced, CA". Below this are filter buttons: "Open now", "Storefronts", "Delivery", "Order online", "Deals", "Best of Weedmaps", "Medical", "Recreational", and "Curbside pickup". A map shows the area around Merced, CA, with several dispensary icons. A sidebar on the left contains a "Delivering to:" address input field, "Showing results 1 - 30", and a "Sort by" dropdown. Two dispensary listings are visible: "Levels - Merced" (3.3 stars, 14 reviews, "Open now") and "One Plant Delivery - Merced" (4.7 stars, 139 reviews, "Closed", "Order online").



# Role of Research

EVALI  
outbreak

SHS/THS in  
Multi-Unit  
Housing

Addictive  
properties

Translation of research into  
policy

Consumer  
protection

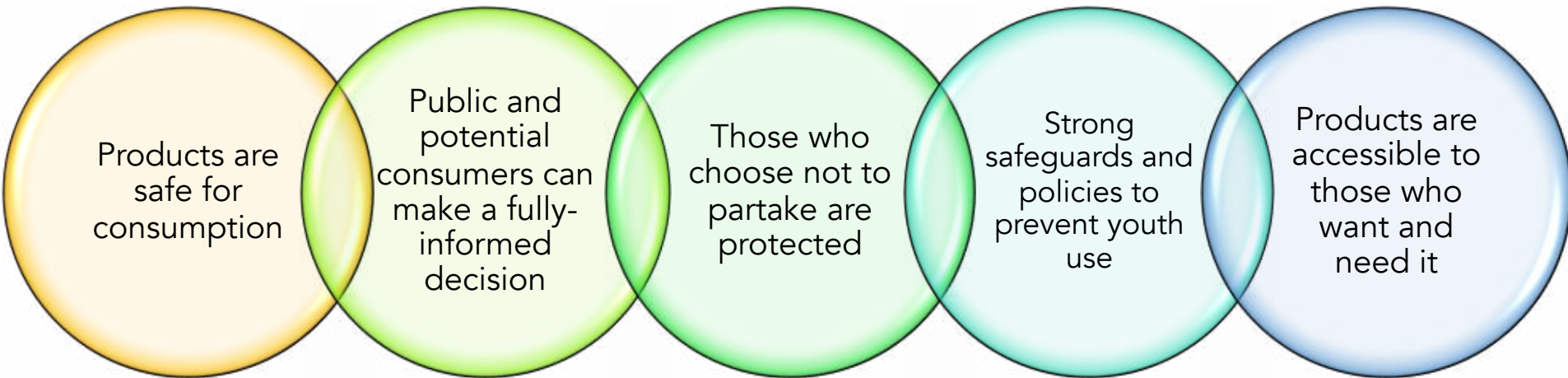
Clean  
indoor air  
policies

Addiction  
support

# Current Work

## “Defining a Healthy Marijuana Marketplace”

(Schneider<sup>1</sup>, Burke<sup>1,2</sup>, Steinberg<sup>3</sup>, Durazo<sup>1,4</sup>, Sethi<sup>1</sup>, Avalos<sup>1</sup>, Song<sup>1,5</sup>)



<sup>1</sup>Nicotine and Cannabis Policy Center, University of California, Merced, Merced CA USA

<sup>2</sup>Public Health, University of California, Merced, Merced CA USA

<sup>3</sup>Department of Population and Public Health Sciences, Keck School of Medicine, University of Southern California, Los Angeles CA USA

<sup>4</sup>Health Sciences Research Institute, University of California, Merced, Merced CA USA

<sup>5</sup>Psychological Sciences, University of California, Merced, Merced CA USA

Sara Schneider  
sschneider2@ucmerced.edu

Hargun Sethi  
hargunsethi18@gmail.com